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Interim Technical Report No. 5

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF JAPANESE FORESTRY ECONOMY:
TWO CASE STUDIES

ONR Contract Nonr 495 (03) (NR 176 110)
and Rockefeller Foundation

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Report No. 5
RF Project 483

REPORT

by

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Columbus 16, Ohio

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Investigation of: Japanese Social Relations

Subject of Report: Interim Technical Report No. 5
SOCIAL ASPECTS OF JAPANESE FORESTRY ECONOMY:
TWO CASE STUDIES

Submitted by: John W. Bennett

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Office of Naval Research Project NR 176-110
and Rockefeller Foundation

RESEARCH IN JAPANESE SOCIAL RELATIONS
(RJSR)

Interim Technical Report No. 5:

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF JAPANESE FORESTRY ECONOMY:
TWO CASE STUDIES

The two cases presented here are part of a larger study to examine the effects of social customs and institutions upon a rational and effective exploitation of forestry resources in Japanese rural communities. Such rational utilization of forests is known in technical language as conservation or "sustained yield" practices. Avoiding a technical discussion of the relevance of social factors upon "sustained yield" practices, the present case studies focus on two crucial social problems that illustrate this relationship in a descriptive, rather than analytical, fashion: (a) the social customs related to the use of "skid trails" so important to the forestry cutting practices and (b) the role of "boss-type" hierarchical relationships between men involved in Japanese forestry operations. The latter case provides a further case-illustration of the Japanese labor boss system, an analysis of which is presented in this Project's Interim Technical Report No. 3.

All names of persons and places and organizations used in these studies are fictitious.

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Department of Sociology and Anthropology
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

April 1953

RESEARCH IN JAPANESE SOCIAL RELATIONS

List of Reports

No. 1: Social and Attitudinal Research in Japan: The Work of SCAP's Public Opinion and Sociological Research Division.

John L. Bennett. Ohio State University Research Foundation and Department of Sociology.
Columbus, Ohio, February 1952.

(also published as article in Journal of East Asiatic Studies, Vol. II, No. 1, October 1952)

No. 2: Methodological Approaches to the Study of Oriental Society and Culture.

John L. Bennett & Iwao Ishino. Ohio State University Research Foundation and Department of Sociology.
Columbus, Ohio, July 1952.

No. 3: The Japanese Labor Boss System: A Description and a Preliminary Sociological Analysis.

Iwao Ishino & John L. Bennett. Ohio State University Research Foundation and Department of Sociology.
Columbus, Ohio, April 1953 (second edition).

No. 4: Summary and Analysis of T. Kanazawa's "The Familistic Structure of Japanese Society."

Michio Nagai & John L. Bennett. Ohio State University Research Foundation and Department of Sociology.
Columbus, Ohio, May 1952.

(also published as article in Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, July 1953)

No. 5: Social Aspects of Japanese Forestry Economy: Two Case Studies.

John L. Bennett. Ohio State University Research Foundation and Department of Sociology.
Columbus, Ohio, April 1953.

No. 6: The Social and Economic Structure of the Japanese Rural Community:
A Preliminary Study of Similarity and Variation. (Title subject
to change)

John W. Bennett, Iwao Ishino & Michio Nagai. Ohio State University
Research Foundation
and Department of
Sociology.

Columbus, Ohio, July 1953.

No. 7: Dozoku: A Preliminary Study of the Composite True and Ritual
Kin Group in the Japanese Rural Community. (Title subject
to change)

Michio Nagai & Iwao Ishino. Ohio State University Research
Foundation and Department of
Sociology.

Columbus, Ohio, August 1953.

INTRODUCTION

On the following pages will be found studies on two related problems of importance in the social economy of Japanese forestry.¹ The first, and briefer study touches upon some of the important factors leading to overcutting of forests; that is, factors involved in the tendency to cut forests with little or no regard for the concept of "sustained yield."² An analysis of the economic role of the "skid trail" and its control by the timber dealer is used to illustrate these tendencies, and the data for Study I are drawn from a series of forest purchases and subsequent lumbering operations set in motion by the construction of one trail.

Study II describes at some length the economic power and social influence of a village "boss"³ who has come to monopolize the entire forest industry of his community. The same individual also figures in the vicissitudes of the skid trail analyzed in the first study. The activities of this boss illustrate the tendency for certain individuals to manipulate the local forestry economy in the search for personal gain and power, thus demonstrating that economic factors in the pure sense are not wholly responsible for the over-exploitation of forests. For a complete understanding, social organization, cultural values, and personal aspirations must also be examined.

1. The data for these studies are a small part of a large body of materials gathered on four field trips to the "Kaga City" region in a prefecture in central Japan. The area was chosen as representative of Japanese forestry areas because of its combination of essential criteria, e.g., various types of forest growth and timber utilization, intimate relationships between forestry and agriculture, utilization of local timber by a flourishing wood products manufacturing industry in Kaga City, and presence of such related physiographic features and problems as river erosion.

2. "Sustained yield" is a concept developed by foresters to describe the system of forest management in which the cutting of trees does not exceed replacement by maturation and reforestation.

3. For a more detailed consideration of the social relationships and cultural norms underlying the "boss" tendency in Japanese society and economy, see Project RJSR, Interim Technical Report No. 3, "The Japanese Labor Boss System."

Taken together, the two studies provide an introduction to certain aspects of Japanese forest management and forestry economy which have emerged as serious problems in the postwar period. It can be said that the great majority of all Japanese engaged in forestry are aware that trees are a vital natural resource - a resource which is renewable and which can be made to yield permanent returns. But human economic arrangements are rarely constructed in accordance with such rational considerations. They are more often based upon immediate human needs, patterns of social relationships, and the particular social, ethical and economic goals which accompany these relationships. Such systems of relationships and goals often vary characteristically from society to society, and from situation to situation in the same society.

Thus modes of economic exploitation can be wasteful, inefficient, and destructive, a condition which can often be tolerated indefinitely when resources are abundant (as has been the case in America), but which becomes a serious problem when supplies are low and near the vanishing point of productivity. When such a state is reached, wasteful methods of exploitation require examination, and more rational techniques must be explored. In a general sense, Japanese forestry has reached this stage.

The situation in the "Kaga City" area may be summarized as follows:

Using the concept of "sustained yield management" as a standard of judgment, it can be said that forest exploitation is indeed "wasteful, inefficient, and destructive." That is, at the present time, trees are cut faster than they can be replaced by natural growth and reforestation. Moreover, techniques such as clear-cutting⁴ and poor forest maintenance contribute to the difficulties of reforestation and productive management. This, of course, is an overall judgment - cases of conscientious reforestation and scientific cutting are present in the area, and most forest owners are aware of the destructive character of present management practices. However, they state they can do little to modify them in the face of certain objective conditions and pressures.

4. "Clear-cutting" is a term used by foresters to describe the practice of cutting all trees off a given plot of land, instead of exercising "selective cutting", or the cutting of only certain trees, e.g., the most mature.

What are these "conditions and pressures" leading to over-cutting and a diminishing forest cover? The following are seen as paramount: overpopulation, postwar reconstruction, pressures and fluctuations in the outside timber market, economic insecurity, the atomistic pattern of forest ownership, and (obviously) steadily diminishing supplies of cuttable trees. These factors are all closely related, and some are parts of larger wholes, but for purposes of brief and simple description they may be discussed separately.

Specifically, "overpopulation" means an excess of persons in forestry regions who are dependent in whole or part upon forests for their living. This is a complex problem, since a living can be derived from the forestry economy in different ways, not all of which require the cutting of trees (e.g., collection of dead branches for fuel). However, the largest increment of this forestry population is supported by commercial lumbering operations. At present some 1.44% of Japan's population lives in forestry (mountainous) areas, and according to labor force and census statistics, some 500,000 persons list forestry and related industries as their major occupation. The population dependent upon forests has increased during the postwar period, and thus Japanese forests must support an even larger population than in prewar times when they were not seriously depleted and when some 60% of Japanese timber requirements were met by imported wood. In the Kaga City area, the number of timber dealers alone was double in 1947 what it had been in 1939.

Postwar reconstruction of bomb-damaged urban areas led to vast demands on Japanese forests. Promotion of modes of construction other than the traditional wood for domestic housing has not occurred, and in the absence of timber imports, native forests have been required to furnish all the needed raw material. Construction needs resulted in a tremendous postwar boom in the whole timber and wood manufacturing industry. Prices soared, and large numbers of new timber dealers, factory operators, and lumber yards sprang into existence, creating new occupations for persons thrown out of remunerative work by the collapse of a military economy and society. Forest owners, suffering from inflation, sold forests eagerly to secure a little cash, and dealers put great pressure upon them to do so.

As the lumber market gradually contracted in 1950 under deflation and credit control, further pressures developed. With the decline in the price of timber, additional impetus to the cutting of trees occurred in many areas, as dealers attempted to

buy whatever they could find in order to make ends meet. Owners faced with enormous taxes sought out dealers in order to sell trees even at a sacrifice in order to get tax money.⁵ Thus economic insecurity in an inflated and disinflated economy, has resulted in further pressures upon the forests. It is acknowledged, of course, that economic difficulties may reach a point when no timber can be sold at all, but before this state is reached Japanese forests could be almost completely denuded.

The pattern of Japanese forest ownership has become increasingly atomistic since the breakup of communally owned forest land in the late Meiji period. Forested regions are divided into innumerable small tracts with separate owners, and even those owners with large acreages generally have their land scattered in many smaller plots through a given locality. Essentially, then, forest land represents a source of income to many individual owners, and in times of economic insecurity, heavy cutting takes place. Wars and other national emergencies hasten the process; agricultural land reforms, which take away from forest owners large tracts of farmland, also step up the rate of cutting on forests formerly reserved as inheritable family property, cut only in cases of extreme need.

Atomization of ownership appears not only with respect to forest owners, but also in one large segment of wood products manufacturing. The making of geta and other wooden footgear, tategu (interior fittings), wooden utensils, and furniture is done not only in factories, but in very small family-owned-and-operated shops. The number of such shops has increased greatly in the postwar period, as a response to the need for economic support of an excess population in a society which does not stress rationalized control of welfare and security by government agencies. In such shops wood products are produced slowly and at a price which is either higher than factory-made items or becomes so low in time of inflation as to lead to a semi-starvation existence for the family operators.

5. The effect of taxation on the cutting of forests is a more complex problem than this statement suggests, but the details cannot be given here. For example, in some respects, high taxes curbed cutting, when owners feared investigation by tax commissions of the extent of their sales of timber to dealers.

The above are the principal objective factors leading to a heavy drain on Japanese forests, and by themselves contribute much to an understanding of the tendency towards wasteful exploitation of forests. But they are not sufficient. To them must be added an analysis of the social organization and culture of the forestry economy - a consideration of the nature of social groups, systems of power and control, motivations and goals, values, traditions, and modes of socio-economic relationship characteristic of the system and of Japanese institutions. The main outlines may be summarized as follows:

The Japanese forestry industry is staffed by the following socio-economic groups: forest owners, resident and absentee; forest managers; timber dealers (who act as middlemen with respect to the owners and timber consumers); sawmill operators; wood products factory owners; small, family-owned wood manufacturing shops; fuelwood processors and dealers; and various categories of workers who are employed by all the above. These groups are in complex systems of economic and social relationship; their mutual support constitutes the most general social function of the industry.

The systems of relationships between these groups are erected on certain characteristic Japanese forms of social behavior or institutional patterns. Relationships between any two parties in the economic transactions involved are based in whole or part upon a system of mutual obligations and loyalties, both between equals and between equals and inferiors. Workers, except in the most industrialized and secularized phases of wood manufacturing, are regarded more as loyal dependents of their employers than as plain employees - "I think of my workers sort of as family members," stated a timber dealer. A wealthy absentee forest owner calls upon family connections to procure the services of a relative living in the village to manage his forest for him, and the manager, in turn, rounds up a group of forest workers who stand in other positions of loyalty and obligation to him. At various stages in the development and maintenance of these relationships, ceremonial elements and traditional values are introduced and used to sanction the system. Complex social hierarchies are built up in this way, and control of human welfare by private social groupings is valued above government management of security.

The pattern of family-like social relations also results in a continual tendency for people engaged in forestry to develop

small enterprise units. Personal relations are maintained whenever possible.⁶ This leads to the formation of small groups like the timber dealer and his corps of a dozen or so forest workers who work for him and no other (unless he permits them to do so after the outsider has made proper overtures); to the innumerable small family workshops where wood products are manufactured on a minute scale; and to certain aspects of the atomized pattern of forest ownership.

As the system described above works out in detail, it results in two principal conditions. First, it means that extensive exploitation of forests becomes necessary to support a very large number of people who have been drawn into the economy through interconnected networks of social hierarchy and obligation. Second, it means that along with purely economic motives and goals (e.g., profit-seeking) go systems of ethics, social goals, cultural values, and religious sanctions. The cutting of trees is related to the power interests of individuals, the fulfillment of obligations, the maintenance of prestige and status, and the functional autonomy and traditions of small "primary" social groups. Individuals within the system display varying combinations of status positions, varying attitudes toward forest conservation, differing economic motives, varying degrees of observance of ceremony and traditions, and needs for power. Simple generalizations, such as, "the difficulty with forestry economy is that everyone seeks a profit, and does not conserve forests," are misleading. "Sustained yield management" is a goal viewed as desirable by practically everyone save the most speculative breed of absentee owner; the point is that in the present situation of pressure of objective circumstances (previously described), the support of an excess population, and the accompanying requirements for the maintenance of a system of social relationships, this rational objective cannot be met.

6. The domination of large sectors of the Japanese economy by "primary" social groupings, with stress on personal factors leads to prevailing irregularities in records, statistics, and business operations. Rational, efficiency-oriented methods and calculations are the exceptions rather than the rule, or at best are ideal patterns only remotely approximated. This makes for considerable difficulty in research operations of the kind reported on in these studies. (See, especially, Study I)

The accompanying two studies illustrate typical processes and situations in the system as described above. The economic pressures resulting in the cutting of timbers are indicated, as are the needs for supporting the forestry population, and the implementation of patterns of status and obligation. The instances treated are representative and typical; the studies should not be taken as a detailed treatise on all aspects of the social economy of Japanese forestry.

Before presenting the studies, one final topic deserves comment. This is the problem of reform. Both SCAP and Japanese Government agencies have been occupied in drafting and carrying out measures for protection of forests, and some progress has been made. Reforestation, prohibitively expensive in an inflated and disinflated economy, is now receiving subsidization from the central government. Relief from double and triple taxation on forest owners has been accomplished to some degree. Thought is being given to the establishment of large-scale work project programs, in order to drain off surplus labor from forestry areas. New enforcement of the Forest Management Plan system in crucial forest regions has been legislated.

While all these measures may help, from the long-range viewpoint they are not sufficient in themselves. There remain such basic difficulties as the atomistic pattern of ownership, the power of the bosses, the lack of control over the timber market, and the wasteful use of wood in traditional domestic architecture. Finally, there remains the Japanese social organization, with its obligations, hierarchies, and small, insulated groups which must be taken into account in any program of reform. The system is an obstacle to certain reforms, but also provides opportunities for the administration of reforms. Thus, powerful bosses like the one described in Study II might well be utilized as the authoritative spokesmen for well-conceived and publicized reform programs.

Methodological Note

In general, the methodology used in the field research program was one of interviewing, for periods of one to three hours, a carefully selected group of respondents. Material secured in such interviews was combined with a variety of data secured from official records of the local government and economic organizations.

The majority of interviews were taken by a staff of mature, highly trained Japanese sociologists, each with more than 15 years of experience in field work in rural sociology and economics. Supplementary interviews were taken by the American personnel with the aid of interpreters. In consideration of the language barrier and the prestige factor, the topics covered in the latter interviews were carefully selected so as to encourage the respondent to talk freely.

Since the studies to follow include much data on essentially covert and often illegal phenomena, two questions arise: How valid is information of this kind? What kind of rapport was established between interviewer and interviewee? With regard to rapport, it can be said that the experience, skill, and friendliness of the Japanese staff were sufficient to break down reserve and tendencies toward concealment in the majority of cases. The Americans remained in the background of the field research, showing themselves only for a few selected interviews covering "harmless" subjects,⁷ and devoting their time to cultivating friendly relations.

As to validity, the following can be said: Whenever possible - and this included the majority of instances - information secured in an interview was cross-checked against other interviews on the same topic, and against documentary data secured in the village office or local economic organization. It was found that in nearly all cases the stories "hung together"; the narrative built up from a series of interviews made connected sense, and the quantitative information checked well. In cases where verbal estimates of quantitative data had to be accepted, it was found that separate estimates given by different informants did not differ appreciably, and simple averages were accepted as the final figure.

The studies to follow contain a series of generalizations about socio-economic relationships, cultural values, and personal goals typical of the forestry industry and in some instances of

7. Although "harmless," the subjects covered in these interviews were actually vital for the sociological and cultural aspects of the research. Information was gathered on such things as business ethics and outlooks, ceremonials governing socio-economic relationships, values and attitudes toward industry and social groups within it, and related topics.

Japanese socio-economic institutions in general. Such generalizations are derived not only from the data secured in this particular project but also from other data on related topics in the files of Project RJSR. In particular, the materials reported upon in Interim Technical Report No. 3, on the "labor boss" system, have been of considerable use.

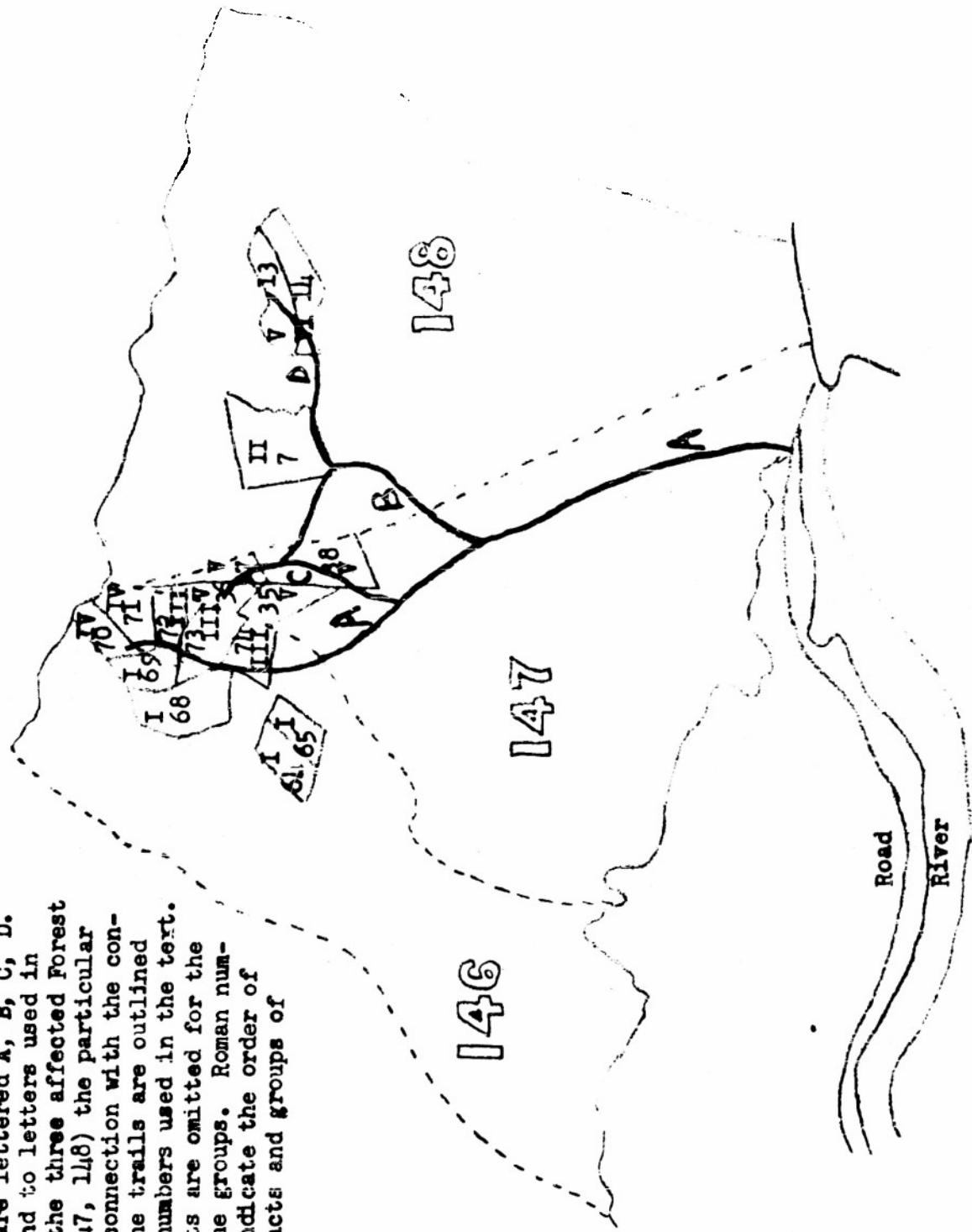
Abbreviations

A list of abbreviations used in the two studies is included here for reference:

- FOA - Forest Owners' Association (Shinrin Kumisi)
- Plan - Forest Management Plan (Segyoan)
- OTC - Ota Timber Company (Ota Mokuzai Kaisha)
- KCC - Kaga City Construction Company (Kaga Kenchiku
(or Konsetsu) Kaisha)
- PTC - Prefectural Timber Company (Keu Chiho Mokuzai
Kaisha)

MAP OF SKID TRAILS AND FORESTS : Study I

Note: Trails are lettered A, B, C, D. These correspond to letters used in text. Within the three affected Forest Groups (145, 147, 148) the particular tracts cut in connection with the construction of the trails are outlined and given the numbers used in the text. Ownership tracts are omitted for the remainder of the Groups. Roman numerals I - VI indicate the order of purchase of tracts and groups of tracts.



STUDY I

THE FUNCTION OF THE "SKID TRAIL" IN THE FORESTRY ECONOMY

A "skid trail" (sori michi) is a path or road constructed in forested mountain areas and is used for transporting timbers to a road or railhead where they may be picked up by truck or train. Such a trail becomes a vital consideration in any lumbering operation at a considerable distance from a road or train stop.

Since the construction of the trail, if none already exists, is an expensive operation, the lumber dealer must include its cost in his estimate of expense and profit on the trees he purchases from a forest owner. The price he pays the owner will in large part be determined by the cost of this trail. Whenever possible, lumber dealers attempt to buy stands in areas where trails already exist. Thus, once a trail is constructed, other lumber dealers will wish to take advantage of its presence and attempt to buy nearby stands. This way they avoid the cost of construction of a trail and can realize greater returns on their purchase. Forest owners with trees near the trail are accordingly besieged with prospective buyers.

In this situation it is not surprising to find that the Forest Management Plan⁸ is honored more in the breach than in the observance. Neither owners nor dealers give the Plan much consideration; the important thing is to make a good purchase or sale. Dealers and brokers simply seek out owners and persuade them to sell their trees, often playing upon personal financial difficulties the owner may find himself in at the time. It is an easy matter to falsify the condition of the forest and the terms of the sale for Forest Owners' Association (FOA) records.

8. The Forest Management Plan is prepared by the local Forest Owners' Association on the basis of prefectural cutting quotas. Timber dealers and forest owners are required to submit their plans for sale of forests and cutting in advance, to permit the FOA to determine whether the particular deal fits in the local Plan quota.

The data in this study are derived from a series of incidents in "Nishiota Mura," near "Kaga City" in central Japan, which took place in 1948. In that year urban dealers were buying enormous quantities of lumber, and local dealers were accordingly extremely active and eager to buy stands of timber. The case recorded here describes a series of timber purchases, all following an initial purchase and construction of the trail.

An analysis of these incidents sheds some light on several topics, in particular, the following: (1) the role of the skid trail construction and rental system in the acceleration of cutting operations in violation of the Plan, and in violation of any system of conservation and scientific management; (2) the role of the skid trail system in the encouragement of systematic falsification of local records of the sale and cutting of timber, and the subsequent corruption of the FOA; (3) the manipulation by local bosses of the trails so as to discourage the buying of tracts of timber by dealers from outside communities.

A. The First Purchase, and Construction of the First Trail
(Eto Timber Co.)

In the Spring of 1948, a Mr. Eto, a timber dealer of "Higashiota Mura", the village adjoining Nishiota, purchased a stand of trees from one Michio Sakai, an absentee forest owner. The area and volume of timber are given below. Part of the data are taken from an official survey made by the FOA for the preparation and implementation of the Plan.

TABLE 1
 The First Purchase
 (Sakai Tracts)

Forest group and number	Kind of tree	Area listed on the village land register	Area as de- termined by survey	Age of tree	Koku of timber ¹¹	Purchased Koku as re- ported to FOA
146 - 68	Sugi ⁹	4 tan ¹⁰	4.8 tan	10	(no data on orig- inal re- gister.	no data
146 - 69	Sugi	4 tan	4.8 tan	20	240	700

Table 1 shows that the total area of the purchased stands was 9.6 tan. The volume of timber is reported for one forest as 240 koku¹¹; the other is not recorded. The age of the two stands is listed as 10 and 20 years.

The records of the FOA of these transactions are usually inaccurate, and often contain omissions, both for the official survey and for the reports of the sale. The volume of timber and the age of the trees are almost always in error, and sometimes the area is likewise. In this particular case, the area is probably correct in the FOA survey figures, but the age and volume are both underestimated. Thus, while the volume of timber as reported to the FOA after the purchase is 700 koku for Forest No. 69, the estimated koku made on the previous survey was only a third of that figure (240).

9. Sugi is the Japanese name for cryptomeria. This tree, while best known to the West in the form of the ancient giants lining the entrance to Japanese shrines and temples, is also the standard, quick-growing commercial tree crop of Japanese lumbering.

10. One cho equals 2.45 acres. One tan is a tenth of a cho, about 1/4th of an acre. One se is a tenth of a tan, about two-hundredths of an acre.

11. One koku equals about 10 cubic feet. One 30-year old sugi tree contains about one koku of wood.

The underestimation of age is done for the purpose of rendering plausible the underestimation of volume.¹² Now, if the trees in Forest No. 69 were really only 20 years old (which is, by the way, too young to cut and use them adequately for timber), 700 koku would be reasonable volume. However, it is known that the trees in Forest No. 69 were in reality about 35 years old - a proper age for cutting. The number of trees per tan is estimated at 100 to 150, and one tree of the age of 35 to 40 produces about one koku of timber. Thus the actual volume of the stand after cutting was at least 1,000 koku.¹³

Since these two forests were at a considerable distance from the road, it was necessary to construct a skid trail in order to remove the timbers. Mr. Eto determined that he could not make a profit on the Sakai timber alone if he had to construct a trail,

12. And the underestimation of volume permits violation of the Plan, and also less tax on the trees cut for both the owner and the dealer.

13. An explanation of the methods used in arriving at "correct" estimates of the age and volume is necessary here. In the first place, it should be understood that the falsification of, and omission in, FOA records is a matter of common knowledge in the community, and is even discussed freely. Residents simply accept it as an inevitable consequence of the inadequacies of the Plan - its consistent underestimation of the amount of timber required to be cut in order to give forest owners a living as well as tax money, and to keep the various dealer and worker groups employed. Resentment against the use of falsification and omission by local bosses to make unreasonable and illegal profits is found, but the necessity of distortion is acknowledged by all.

Therefore, it is not difficult to secure information from informants as to the probable actual age and volume of the timber stands involved. The data were secured in interviews with forest owners, dealers, and workers who had an intimate acquaintance with the conditions of the tracts and with the particular deals. In nearly all cases more than one estimate was secured, and in all cases the separate estimates checked closely. In this and subsequent reporting of these verbal estimates, it has not been thought necessary to provide details. The reader is asked to accept the figures as reasonable and probable, and certainly more nearly correct than the FOA official records.

so he attempted to buy some additional stands. This attempt was successful, and one Keizo Ikeda¹⁴ was persuaded to sell the following two tracts:

TABLE 2

The First Purchase
(Ikeda Tracts)

Forest group and number	Kind of tree	Area listed on the village land register	Area as determined by survey	Age of tree	Koku of timber	Purchased Koku as reported to FOA
146 - 64	Sugi	3 tan	3 tan 6 se	15	70	no data
146 - 65	Coppice	2 tan	2 tan 4 se	5	no data	no data

Investigation revealed that the data for these tracts were also unreliable. The No. 64 forest was actually about 25 years old, and contained about 300 koku. No. 65, although registered as a pure coppice stand of 5 years of age, was actually a mixed sugi-coppice stand, and yielded a considerable number of cuttable trees. Villagers stated that 7 tan was a more accurate estimate than 6 tan for both stands. The total volume of timber secured from the two forests was about 750 koku.

The total area of the Sakai and Ikeda tracts was therefore 1 cho 6 tan 4 se by actual survey. The volume of timber removed from the tracts is not known definitely, but by the official report it is 1700-1800 koku, and in the estimated figure, 2300-2400 koku.

The price for these four tracts, as registered with the FOA, was ¥105,400 for 700 koku, or ¥150 per koku. If the actual volume was in the neighborhood of 1800 koku, the price should have been ¥360,000. However, at the time the sale was made, the current price paid by dealers was about ¥400 per koku, and consequently the actual price could have been, and probably was ¥700,000 to

14. A relative of Sokichi Ikeda, the present mayor of Nishiota and an important figure in Study II.

¥900,000. It is not at all unusual to find the price as registered with the FOA to be only a sixth of the real price. The interest of the owner in evading taxes, and the interests of the dealer in evading taxes and making a profit, are sufficiently strong to encourage such falsification of reports.¹⁵

Thus, Mr. Eto purchased his four tracts, constructed the skid trail ("A" on the map), and cut his trees. The skid trail was left as it was, and its management was turned over to one Kaichiro Ashida, a timber dealer and broker in Nishiota.¹⁶

B. The Second Purchase and Construction of the Second Trail
(Odaka Timber Co.)

Mr. Eto's purchase received the usual publicity once it became official in the FOA, and other dealers immediately became interested in the possibilities of buying nearby stands in order to "cash in" on the proximity of the trail. Accordingly, a timber dealer by the name of Odaka, a resident of "Oite Machi," made arrangements in February, 1948, to buy two other tracts from Keizo Ikeda. Mr. Ikeda, as well as other informants, stated that the sale was made because the dealer put considerable pressure on him to take advantage of the existence of the skid trail and realize a quick profit on the trees. Ikeda yielded, even though he owned forests of greater and more cuttable age elsewhere. The tracts were as follows:

15. While this study cannot enter into the full ramifications of the forestry economy, it should be pointed out that the system is not merely one of forest owner - timber dealer relationships. Most of the dealers are beholden to bigger dealers, or to urban lumber companies, from which the local dealers borrow money to finance a purchase. The big dealers and companies are glad to do this in order to be assured of a steady flow of timber. In such manner the pressures to buy and sell timber are built up.

16. The two tracts purchased by Eto from Mr. Sakai had, in 1950, come into the ownership of Ashida. The details of this transaction are not known.

TABLE 3

The Second Purchase

Forest Group and Number	Kind of tree	Area listed on the village land register	Area as determined by survey	Age of tree	Koku of timber	Purchased Koku as reported to FOA
148 - 7	Sugi	1 cho	1 cho 3 se	30	824	1,000

As reported by Odaka, 100 koku of trees were felled. Informants estimate from 1500 to 2000 koku.

It was necessary for Odaka to construct a second skid trail ("B" on map), connecting it to the first trail (A), in order to remove the timber.

C. The Third Purchase (Mr. Tasaka's Unsuccessful Purchase)

In February of 1948, a Mr. Tasaka, a Kaga City timber dealer, approached Kaichiro Ashida and asked that he assist him in seeking out cuttable forests near the Ito trail (now under Ashida's management). Ashida succeeded in negotiating for Tasaka the purchase of three tracts adjoining the trail.¹⁷ The tracts were as follows:

TABLE 4

The Third Purchase

Forest group and number	Kind of tree	Area listed on the village land register	Area as determined by survey	Age of tree	Koku of timber	Purchased Koku as reported to FOA
146 - 72	Sugi	4 tan	4 tan 8 se	20	no data	120
146 - 73	Sugi	4 tan	4 tan 8 se	20	no data	250
146 - 74	Sugi	4 tan	4 tan 8 se	20	no data	250

17. The names of the owners can be found in the Summary at the end of the Study. It is important to note that among these owners, as well as among those in subsequent purchases reported later, appear certain family names (Ikeda, Ashida). These owners are relatives of some of the principal figures in the socio-economic relationships of forestry in Nishiota Village, reported on in both Studies.

Ashida informed Tasaka that he had his permission to use the trail and also that he, Ashida, had hired a gang of lumbermen for Tasaka's use. Tasaka contacted the leaders among this group of workers, who informed him that they were ready to work.

At this point it is necessary to discuss certain aspects of Ashida's role in the forestry economy and in the social organization of Nishiota. The forestry industry in this community is largely under the control of Yoichiro Harasaki, a former mayor and the present Chief of the FOA. Harasaki operates as a "boss" in the village, ¹⁸ demanding loyalty and action in his interests from the dealers, sawmill operators, and workers of Nishiota. Kaichiro Ashida is known as a minor "boss" in the same village, a boss who is nominally and generally within Harasaki's sphere of control, but who possesses aspiration of his own. That is, he has been known to act unilaterally in attempts to consolidate his own power.

It appears that in the case of the Tasaka purchase Ashida did precisely that; he arranged the deal without informing Harasaki of his intention or actions, apparently hoping that the sale and cutting operation would go through without hindrance. He did not explain to Tasaka the extent of Harasaki's power, nor did he advise him to placate the "boss" by the conventional aisatsu (courtesy) ceremony (i.e., offering sake to Harasaki and humbly requesting his permission to buy forests in Nishiota). Tasaka may have realized that this ritual was expected of him, but in the absence of Ashida's specific advice, seems to have felt it unnecessary. At any rate, he made no contact with Harasaki before, during, or after the sale of the tracts.

On the day lumbering was to begin, Mr. Tasaka went to the forest with the traditional supply of sake to present to the workers during the ceremony which usually precedes any work operation in local industry in Japan. To his surprise, he found only four lumbermen on the site. Ten trees were cut that day. Tasaka inquired as to why the remainder of the workers had not appeared, but no satisfactory answer was given. He decided to postpone any further cutting until he could locate the rest of his lumbermen.

On the following day Kaichiro Ashida visited Tasaka's home, and after considerable oblique questioning and conversation, Ashida

18. The details are presented in Study II.

proposed that "probably it would be best" if Tasaka were to sell the three tracts to the Ota Timber Co. (OTC),¹⁹ and cease attempts to cut the trees. He stated that this Company had just purchased two forests (Nos. 70 and 71) adjoining Tasaka's and had hired most of the available workers to begin lumbering there. Ashida explained that he had unfortunately not known about this when he rounded up the lumbermen for Tasaka (but then, apparently neither had the workers!).

It is clear from various lines of evidence that the purchase of the adjoining stand by the OTC was done quickly and at the order of Yoichiro Harasaki. Its purpose was to stop Tasaka's operations. Why?

A number of reasons can be given, and collectively they indicate that a kind of crisis had occurred in Harasaki's sphere of influence. That is, it became necessary for Harasaki to stop this particular deal or find his power and control placed in jeopardy. The circumstances are as follows:

First, Harasaki was offended and vindictive over Tasaka's failure to practice aisattsu toward him. Harasaki permits outsiders to buy trees in Nishiota, but they usually cannot do so without first paying their respects to the "boss" and letting him explore the possibilities of "cutting in" on the deal.²⁰

Second, it was necessary for Harasaki to teach Ashida a lesson. As will become clear from subsequent analysis, if Ashida had been permitted to go through with the deal, it would have meant that his influence and control in forestry was nearly equal to Harasaki's. This could not be tolerated. It is interesting to note that Harasaki arranged to have Ashida himself persuade Tasaka to sell to the OTC; that is, Ashida was apparently requested to make amends by reversing his own deal, and at the same time to signify that he was within the Harasaki circle of henchmen who act in the boss's interest. This sort of technique is, in the Japanese system of social relations, much more effective than attempts at outright destruction of a rival's reputation and finances.

19. A company now dissolved, but at that time under the control of Mr. Harasaki who owned over half the stock. Details of its operations and financial structure will be found in Study II.

20. This is not done in every case. If the outside dealer is particularly powerful or has important friends, Harasaki will not insist on courtesy. Sometimes, especially in the downstream area where his control is not absolute, the sale simply does not come to ...s attention.

The third reason for Harasaki's action is more complicated, and in itself is important enough to make the act a necessary one for his interests. The forests purchased by Tasaka were bought during the war, on special government contract, by the Chimokusha, the Prefecture Timber Co. (PTC).²¹ At the time of the Surrender these forests were still uncut, and the owners had wanted to cancel the contracts. The price stated in the contracts was the low official wartime price, and the owners knew they could get much more for their trees in the postwar building boom. However, the FOA, which operated as the agent for the PTC, declared that the contracts must be honored. Harasaki is Chief of the FOA. Harasaki and other members of the wartime FOA and PTC had formed the OTC in 1946, and received from the FOA the right to cut all the stands remaining in these old wartime, low-price contracts.

Now, as stated above, Tasaka's three stands were among these wartime-contract stands assigned by the FOA to the OTC. The owners of these forests decided, probably under Ashida's suggestion, that they could get a much better price if they sold out from under the old contracts, to another dealer. If Harasaki had permitted this, the OTC might have lost its control over the other stands. Owners might have decided on the basis of these sales that arrangements with the OTC need not be honored, and the entire operation would be ruined. Thus it was vital that Harasaki intervene. The serious financial implications of the deal also made it all the more imperative that Ashida restore himself to favor with the "boss". Harasaki might have used more extreme methods of reprisal than he customarily exercised.

It should be noted that actually Harasaki could cover the whole affair with legality. He could have shown that the sellers of the three tracts were, technically, disposing of land not actually theirs, since the contracts with the PTC, taken over by the FOA and assigned to the OTC, took ownership out of their hands.

21. This company was one of the special wartime organizations, financed by Japanese Government funds, and created for the purpose of regulating a steady flow of timber into the war economy. It was dissolved in 1946, as part of the general dismantling of the Japanese wartime structure.

From the standpoint of the lumbermen, little choice was present. In the first place, Tasaka was an outside dealer and could not promise the workers steady employment after the single cutting was over. In addition, Nishiota lumbermen are "expected" to work only for Harasaki or for dealers who have received his permission to buy and cut stands in the village. For a combination of such reasons the great majority of the workers shifted over to the OTC operation.²²

Mr. Tasaka stated in an interview that he learned all the above from friends and from Mr. Ashida in the days following Ashida's proposal. He realized that even if he were to refuse to sell to the OTC, he could still be prevented from using the skid trail. He was informed that the OTC had a habit of blocking trails with timbers or carts if they were to be used by outsiders or by those lacking the necessary Harasaki clearance. Accordingly he decided to "give up the fight" and sell the forests to the OTC. Mr. Tasaka stated that he intended never again to purchase stands in Nishiota Village.

The OTC bought the three forests, indemnifying Tasaka for the part-payment he had already made on them. The company paid the three owners the whole or part (the exact amount could not be determined) of the purchase price agreed on with Tasaka.

D. The Fourth Purchase (Ota Timber Co.)

The two forests bought by the OTC for the purpose of blocking Tasaka's operation were as follows:

TABLE 5

The Fourth Purchase

Forest group and number	Kind of tree	Area listed on the village land register	Area as determined by survey	Age of tree	Koku of timber	Purchased Koku as reported to FOA
146 - 70	Sugi	4 tan	4 tan 6 se	20	no data	240
146 - 71	Sugi	4 tan	4 tan 8 se	20	no data	240

22. The concept of employment among lumbermen in this area is based on the group, or nakama, which works as a unit under a worker representative (daihyosha). The workers only in rare cases accept employment as single individuals. Thus when conditions prevented their acceptance of Mr. Tasaka's job, the lumbermen left in a body. It is entirely possible that the four workers who actually did show up at Mr. Tasaka's site were isolates who held no membership in any particular group. However, the circumstances concerning these four men are not known.

Combining these two with the three taken over from Tasaka, the total area was 2 cho 4 tan; the reported volume 12,000 koku. The actual volume of timber was two to three times this amount. The actual price can be estimated in the neighborhood of ¥1,300,000.

These given tracts were cut by the Kaga Construction Co., another Harasaki company. The logs were carried out on the skid trail managed by Kaichiro Ashida.

E. The Fifth Purchase (Yanagida Sawmill Co.)

Through the go-between services of Mr. Ashida, the Yanagida Sawmill Co. purchased five tracts of forest, on the promise of being able to use the skid trail. Proper representations were made to Mr. Harasaki in this case. The tracts were as follows:

TABLE 6

The Fifth Purchase

Forest group and number	Kind of tree	Area listed on the village land register	Area as determined by survey	Age of tree	Koku of timber	Purchased Koku as reported to FOA
147 - 35	Sugi	4 tan	5 tan 1 se	15	no data	128
147 - 36	Sugi	4 tan	5 tan 1 se	15	no data	128
147 - 37	Sugi	4 tan	5 tan 1 se	15	no data	no data
147 - 38	Sugi	1 tan 3 se	1 tan 6 se	10	no data	no data
148 - 13	Sugi	2 tan 3 se	2 tan 3 se	15	no data	593

The total area of these forests was about 1 cho 9 tan, and the total volume can be estimated at about 1500 koku. It was necessary to construct two more skid trails ("C" and "D" on the map) to remove the logs from these tracts. Since D connected with B, it was necessary to reach an understanding with Mr. Odaka, who owned B.

F. The Sixth Purchase (Tawara Geta Shop)

The Tawara Geta Shop of Kaga City purchased the following forests:

TABLE 7
The Sixth Purchase

Forest group and number	Kind of tree	Area listed on the village land register	Area as determined by survey	Age of tree	Koku of timber	Purchased Koku as reported to FOA
148 - 14	Sugi	2 tan	2 tan 6 se	7	no data	101

The actual age of the trees was about 25, and the volume of timber 300 koku. Mr. Tawara arranged to use skid trails D and B but was unable to use A. He stated to the interviewer that he was unable to discover the owner or manager of skid trail A, and therefore could not use it. If any other reason exists it could not be determined in interviews. The logs had to be removed by pulling them through clearings on the land of other forest owners, and considerable trouble was experienced in getting permission. Nevertheless, Mr. Tawara stated that the use of D and B was sufficient in itself to lead to a good profit on the purchase.

G. Summary

The history of the construction and use of these skid trails may be summarized as follows:

Purchase 1	Skid trail A	Constructed by Eto Timber Co.
Purchase 2	Skid trail B	Constructed by Ōdaka Timber Co. Borrowed a part of A.
Purchase 3	(Tasaka's unsuccessful purchase)	
Purchase 4	Skid trail A	"Borrowed" by Ota Timber Co.
Purchase 5	Skid trails C,D	Constructed by Yanagida Sawmill Co. Borrowed A and B.
Purchase 6	Skid trails B,D	Borrowed by Tawara Geta Shop. A not available.

The ten forest owners and the amount of forest land involved may also be given in summary form:

1. Masaru Sakai	4 tan 8 se	146 - 68
Masaru Sakai	4 tan 8 se	146 - 69
2. Keizo Ikeda	3 tan 6 se	146 - 64
Keizo Ikeda	2 tan 4 se	146 - 65
Keizo Ikeda	1 tan 0 se	148 - 7
Keizo Ikeda	2 tan 3 se	148 - 13
3. Yozo Karasaki	4 cho 8 tan	146 - 72
4. Yoshio Ashida	4 cho 8 tan	146 - 73
5. Toru Ikeda	4 cho 8 tan	146 - 74
6. Hana Kodaira	4 cho 8 tan	146 - 70
Hana Kodaira	4 cho 8 tan	146 - 71
7. Seizo Ikeda	5 cho 1 tan	147 - 35
8. Teisuke Ashida	5 cho 1 tan	147 - 36
9. Jiro Manabe	4 cho 0 tan	147 - 37
10. Saburo Karasaki	1 cho 3 tan	147 - 38
Saburo Karasaki	2 cho 3 tan	148 - 14
TOTAL	43 cho 6 tan 9 se	

Thus, after an initial cutting of about 1 cho of forest, an additional 43 or 44 cho were cut, the entire operation set in motion by the fact that a skid trail had been constructed for the first 1 cho. Several of the forests cut were too young to make good lumber, and falsifications of and omissions in FOA records for purposes of tax evasion and violation of the Forest Management Plan occurred throughout.

H. Conclusions

In the preceding analysis, the role of the skid trail in the local forestry economy emerges as exceedingly important. While it should not be regarded as the single cause of overcutting, violation

of the Plan, and the machinations of local bosses, it does occupy a pivotal position in many of the social and economic relationships surrounding these aspects of the economy. Any lumbering operation situated in mountainous areas far from a road requires a trail for transportation of the timbers, and since its construction is an expensive one, it will become a vital element in the whole transaction.

The trail can be seen as the physical object which ties together some of the important socio-economic groups in the forestry industry. The owner has an interest in selling his trees; the dealer in buying them and realizing a profit; the workers in securing a job; and the larger dealers and timber consumers in having a supply of timber. The trail is necessary in order to set in motion this train of relationships. If the timbers can be brought out of the mountain and down to a road or railhead, their disposition becomes a simple matter.

Because of the crucial position of the trail in this system of relationships, its ownership or management becomes a source of considerable power. Not only can the person who controls the trail afford to grant favors to other dealers and owners, but he can prevent others from using the trail by the simple expediency of blocking it with timbers or vehicles. This power always falls to the lumber dealer, since in terms of the present forestry economy, it is the dealer who is required and permitted to finance the construction of the trail and control it. Some cases are known of owners building their own trails, even cooperatively, but these are very rare. In the great majority of instances, it is the dealer who is responsible.

The skid trail, then, highlights the importance of middleman control in the forestry industry. Such middleman control means that the forests must support a larger number of persons than would be the case if greater independence on the part of the forest owners were present. And this, in turn, leads to overcutting. Owners could realize a greater profit on their sales of stands, and also probably be required to cut fewer stands, if they were to construct their own trails, hire their own lumber crews, and sell directly to the sawmills and construction firms. Certainly this would eliminate the practice of dealers high-pressuring owners into selling stands (which are often too young to cut) merely in order to take advantage of a recently constructed skid trail.

Finally, reduction of the middleman control over trails might help to modify the tendency toward bossism in the forestry economy. An important segment of Mr. Harasaki's power derives from his ability to control, through henchmen or dealers owing allegiance, the local trails. If trails could be constructed by owners, or by the local government as a public thoroughfare, one source of the power of the boss would be reduced in importance if not eliminated entirely.

STUDY II

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY "BOSS"

The present study examines the activities and pattern of power of Yoichiro Harasaki, a typical "boss" of the forestry industry of the "Kaga City" area in a central Japan prefecture. During the post-war period, this man has come to control a large sector of the forestry industry of his village, "Nishiota Mura", a community located in one of the several river valleys which furnish timber for the wood products industry of Kaga City. A description of one incident in his rise to power and choice of methods appeared in the previous study of the "skid trail."

By the Spring of 1950, the influence of this man was greater than that of any other "boss" in the region. An analysis of Mr. Harasaki's activities consequently becomes a study of both the unique and the typical - unique in the sense that no other boss has been as successful in the accumulation of power, and typical in the sense that his operations illustrate in detail the full flowering of basic tendencies in the socio-economic system of forestry. The crucial importance to the economy of certain social relationships and personal goals can be shown in some detail.

The study consists of four parts: first, a brief discussion of Mr. Harasaki's personal and family history; second, his property and occupations; third, a description of his business dealings and sphere of power; fourth, a general summary and analysis of the patterns implicit in the above, and fifth, their significance for the forestry industry and the general Japanese economic problem.

A. Personal and Familial History

Mr. Harasaki is not a member of an old, established, and wealthy family of the region. At the present time, four families of "Haneda Buraku" of Nishiota Mura are known by the name Harasaki. None of these families are either old or prominent in the locality, and none of them own any forest or farmland. Yoichiro is a member of one, and Masaru Harasaki, a man of importance in Kaga City, of another.

The two men are cousins. Both Yoichiro and Masaru are regarded as "career men" by the villagers - persons who made their own way up from lowly beginnings and became financially successful.

Yoichiro's rise is based upon his close connections with the Ikeda family of "Hanagamori Hamlet" (far upstream area). This family owns 1200 cho of forest and also maintains the unique "Hanagamori Shrine," a privately owned property which commands a comfortable income from the donations of pious farmers who come to seek good luck for their crops from the patron deity, Tengu.²³

Some thirty years ago, Yoichiro was in charge of a grazing meadow in Hanagamori, owned by the Ikeda family. He supervised several herds of cattle, including 100 head of his own. His plan was to build a dairy in Kaga City, but financial inadequacies prevented this, and the cattle were sold. However, in the meantime

23. This Shrine is an important and famous institution of the Kaga City area. It was originally the private shrine of ancestors of the Ikeda family, and dedicated to the family clan deity. It is still owned by the family. The shrine was founded by one of the yamabushi, the "mountain priests," possibly as early as the 8th century A.D. These priests used to wander in the remote mountainous regions of Japan in search of spiritual enlightenment and solitude. According to legend, the "Hanagamori Shrine" was founded by Ennogyoja, the 8th century yamabushi who is said to have established the custom of mountain worship. The founder of the Ikeda family is said to be one of the two oni (ogres) who served Ennogyoja. During the Tokugawa period, the shrine was visited by pilgrims on their way to Nikko, which lies just over the mountains, and became one of the important subsidiary places of worship in the Nikko area. The deity, Tengu, was probably added later, although some claim that it was the original family god. The shrine is particularly popular among farmers of the Kanto and Tohoku regions, who feel that the deity has the virtue of increasing crops and protecting the worshipper against fire and theft. Forty persons are employed at the shrine, and the establishment obtains a yearly income of ¥1,500,000 from donations and concessions. It gives existence to several inns, restaurants, and souvenir shops. Mr. Ikeda's prestige as owner and patron of the shrine is very great, and he has a permanent high status in his community. As long as Mr. Karasaki is a friend and business manager for Mr. Ikeda, he can enjoy considerable freedom from interference, since few would consider offending Ikeda. He borrows Ikeda's sacred prestige, as it were.

he had become a close friend and kind of godson of the dowager mother of the Ikeda family, who at that time controlled the forest land belonging to the family. She eventually permitted him to establish several charcoal kilns in the Ikeda forests, an occupation which throughout the late war netted him a considerable profit. With the money, he set himself up in Kaga City as a timber dealer at the time of the Surrender.

His favored relationship with the Ikeda family had also brought him into virtual control of the vast forest lands owned by the family. The present head of the family, and mayor of Nishiota, Sokichi Ikeda, made Harasaki virtual manager and dictator of the family forests about ten years ago. He permits Harasaki to operate the forests according to his own initiative, recognizing that in him he has a shrewd and expert forester.

Harasaki's activities reached a peak during and after the war. Since he was the confidant and financial manager of the wartime (and now) mayor, Mr. Ikeda, he secured an appointment as Chief of the Forest Owners' Association. His ability in purchasing and delivering timbers on Government contracts earned him the respect of the Prefecture Timber Co. (PTC).²⁴ According to informants, he was particularly skillful in buying trees for government contracts at a low price, delaying their cutting, and then selling them for a very high price to contractors during the construction boom after the war.

He also secured control of the Kaga City Construction Co. (KCC), and this business, his control over the Ikeda forests, and his multiple relationships with the timber dealers, sawmill operators, and workers of Nishiota, make him a very powerful figure.

Mr. Harasaki is a brusque but gracious person, apt to be demanding and dictatorial, particularly when crossed. He is always polite and somewhat formal in his manners, but has been known to lose his temper violently. He is a man who gives the appearance of one very sure of himself, who is annoyed by opposition and accustomed to command.

24. One of the special wartime companies financed by government funds, created for the purpose of regulating a steady flow of timber to the national economy. It was dissolved in 1946.

Mr. Harasaki is the head of a family of six, residing in a large traditional-type house and compound in "Kinoshita Hamlet" in an upstream buraku of Nishiota. The family consists of himself, his wife, eldest daughter, fourth son (an employee in the village office), a manservant (also a timber dealer), and a maid.

B. Jobs, Business Connections, Property

Mr. Harasaki is the present chief of the Forest Owners' Association (FOA), and a director of the Agricultural Cooperative Association (ACA), the two most influential organizations in the village economy. He is a village ex-mayor and a former village assemblyman. He became chief of the FOA in 1943, and was mayor of Nishiota Mura from March 1945 to December 1946. Thus, for nearly two years he held simultaneously the positions of chief of the FOA and mayor of the village.

Mr. Harasaki is the present postmaster of Nishiota. A third-class Japanese post office is generally managed on a contract basis by a local man of wealth and importance. The post office is also a local bank, since postal savings and the ACA have the only deposit facilities in the community. Through Harasaki's job as postmaster and his directorship in the ACA, he is in a position to know the financial condition of the majority of villagers.

He lists his occupation as timber dealer. He is recorded in the village office as owning 27 cho 9 tan of forest land, 1 cho 3 tan of paddy fields, and 5 tan 6 se of upland fields.²⁵ He was required by the Land Reform to sell 2 tan 5 se of farmland. These figures do not quite square with data obtained from a household census card left at the Harasaki residence to be filled out and collected later. According to this card, he owns 47 cho of forest (twice as much as the village office volunteered),²⁶ 7 tan of

25. One cho equals 2.45 acres; one tan is about one-fourth acre; one se about two-hundredths of an acre.

26. As shown in Study I, variation in reports for forest land holdings is common. Underestimation in official records of area owned may be found convenient for purposes of tax evasion and for concealment of trees cut in violation of the Forest Management Plan. Harasaki's relative truthfulness on the research project card is probably due to his decision not to falsify data for what he viewed as an official Occupation study.

paddy fields, and 7 tan of upland fields. The discrepancy between these figures for farmland and those in the village office is due to the fact that he leases some farmland to local farmers.

Adding to his 50-or-so cho of personally-owned forest what is held in the names of his wife and children, the total area of forest possessed by the family is approximately ("approximately" because of certain unreliabilities - see footnote 23) 108 cho. Tosaku Maeda, a kobun²⁷ of Harasaki's who works in the FOA office, and a man proud of his connection with the "boss," stated that the total forest land holdings of the family is 120 cho.

Harasaki buys and sells forest land very frequently, so that while his total personal holdings average in the neighborhood of 50 cho, this figure may fluctuate from time to time. For example, in 1945-47 he sold 20 cho of forest land and the standing trees which had been damaged by fire, for part payment of his assets tax of ¥470,000. The larger part of the tax was paid in cash and securities.

Aside from his timber dealing activities, Mr. Harasaki's most important business connection is with the Kaga City Construction Co. He was president of this company for a short period after the war, but withdrew in favor of his eldest son in 1948. He has no official position in the organization now, but openly functions, without salary, as an advisor of the company. Mr. Ikeda is listed as a salaried advisor.

27. The term, "kobun" ("like child") is the reciprocal of "oyabun" ("like parent"). Oyabun is the term frequently used in Japan to refer to a boss, and kobun to his followers or henchmen. The phrase, "oyabun-kobun system," denotes the system of mutual obligations and superordinate-subordinate status relationships. The terms are, in some respects, becoming archaic in feeling, and are often applied only to gangster groups, or to formal and ritualized relationships found particularly among labor bosses. Local people frequently used the terms in discussing Mr. Harasaki and his followers, but strictly speaking, Harasaki is not an oyabun in the formal sense, nor are his followers and henchmen kobun. Harasaki is, essentially, a large-scale entrepreneur who uses traditional Japanese methods in the formation of his socio-economic relationships. People also refer to Harasaki by the more casual term, "kashira," which simply means "boss". (See Project RJSR, Interim Technical Report No. 3)

C. Business Activities and Sphere of Power

The previous sections summarized Mr. Harasaki's personal background, family connections, occupations, and property. In this section details of his business operations and the areas of village society and economy under his control will be described.

(1) The Village

Harasaki's status as an ex-mayor, and his close friendship and business relationship with the present mayor, Mr. Ikeda, have put Harasaki in an especially fortunate position to influence village affairs. Respondents commented that Ikeda consults Harasaki frequently on village matters, and his advice is usually taken. Mr. Ikeda himself is not particularly aggressive or even active in public affairs, being more interested in his many hobbies and in the affairs of the family shrine. He is not concerned with financial matters and permits Harasaki to manage them for him. For example, Harasaki sold some of Ikeda's forest land to pay Ikeda's assets tax, which had been placed in his charge.

The present village office staff under Ikeda is virtually identical to that employed by Harasaki during his term of office as mayor. This group, which includes within it Harasaki's younger son, are regarded throughout the community as loyal followers of the boss.

Harasaki's job as postmaster, his supervision of deposit facilities of the post office, and his knowledge of those of the ACC provide him with detailed information on the personal financial condition of all those villagers who use these facilities. This includes nearly all the local forest owners, most timber dealers, and merchants, and some workers.

(2) Economic Organizations

Yoichiro is the Chief of the FOA and a director of the ACC. Within the FOA he has built up a system of control based on the personal loyalty of (and often, hold over) a group of henchmen.²⁸ Most of the 16 other directors of the ACC are Harasaki's

28. His power in the ACC is not impressive, although he apparently uses the organization as a source of information and personal prestige. His sphere of control and influence is largely limited economically to forestry.

acquaintances, and two directors are two of Harasaki's very closest friends (Tadashi Odaira and Utaro Maeda). They are also large forest land owners in Nishiota, and are village assemblymen. This tendency for overlapping control - in this case the ACC and the village assembly - is a strong characteristic of Harasaki's system of power. It results in a group of individuals who cut across and dominate social, economic, and political segments of the community, all these individuals owing final allegiance to Mr. Harasaki.

Within the FOA, Yoichiro can count at all times on the help of one Tosaku Maeda. This man is a technical consultant²⁹ for the FOA, was hired by Harasaki, and reportedly is a very knowledgeable and efficient technician. Maeda is also an official of the KCC, assigned to the job of buying stands of timber within the village and rounding up squads of lumbermen for cutting operations. The advantage of this dual role are obvious: He is in an excellent position to obtain information about stands forest owners are offering for sale, to recommend a suitable price to the FOA, and thus enable the KCC (Harasaki) to make the purchase. Maeda is himself an oyabun of considerable power, and has several circles of kobun among timber dealers, workers, and others.

The membership of the FOA, as is the case in nearly all forestry regions, is dominated by the largest forest land owners. In Nishiota these people are in league with Harasaki and are to a great extent dependent upon him, since he controls a substantial portion of the timber market of the community. There is little question but what Harasaki dominates the entire organization and all its operations. Some details are necessary:

As previously explained, Mr. Harasaki has virtually complete control over the vast Ikeda forests. This means that he determines the rate and volume of cutting and through his various official and business roles can also determine the price of the timber and, indirectly, the amount of tax charged. In addition to his control over these forests, he has come to handle the business of a majority of other forest owners in the community.

29. His official job is to inspect forests put up for sale and make judgments of value based on age and condition of the trees.

A study of various reports and estimates given by respondents indicates that a minimum of 50% and a maximum of 75% of all trees cut in Nishiota forests in 1949 were bought and felled by the KCC. The average of the estimates of volume of cutting by the KCC is 15,000 koku³⁰ of timber per year.

The FOA is required to publish and submit to the Prefectural Government a yearly report on cutting based on the limits set by the Forest Management Plan. According to the 1948 report (1949 edition not available at time of writing), 28,534 koku of timber were cut in Nishiota Mura, out of which the KCC is reported as having cut 2,350 and the Ota Timber Co. (another Harasaki Company, to be described later), 3,883 koku. This makes a reported total of 6,233 koku cut by organizations under Harasaki's control. If the previous estimates by reliable informants are even nearly correct, this official figure for the Harasaki operations is only about half of the actual total. If this is correct, the official figure for the village total is accordingly much too low.

Masaru Harasaki is reported as having cut 2,130 koku - a figure also regarded by informants as less than half of the actual amount.

As shown in Study I, under-reporting of the amount of trees cut appears to be a covert systematic policy of the FOA. In the case of the officers, directors, and consultants of the organization, fewer cutting operations than actually take place are reported, and in most cases the volume of trees cut is reported as less than actually took place. The important point is that the leaders of the organization have the power to report only as much as they please, the amount determined by their personal interests. Harasaki, as chief, is in a position to reward his friends and associates by ignoring or even assisting their dealings, thereby building up obligations to himself. The only check upon the group is their own estimate of what will appear to be a fairly reasonable amount, i.e., a report which approximates the limits set by the Plan. Leaders of the FOA also do not pay the required charge to the organization on the trees they cut.³¹

30. One koku equals about 10 cubic feet. One 30-year old sugi tree contains about one koku of wood.

31. In addition to such deliberate falsification of records, much cutting takes place by black market dealers who enter into collusion with the forest owner and arrange with him not to report the sale and felling at all. It is not known definitely if the Harasakis are involved in this type of deal, although rumors stating so are current in the village.

A typical instance of Mr. Harasaki's activities with reference to the FOA may be described. His control over the Ikeda forests means that his cutting takes place in the remote mountainous areas of Haganamori, away from the inhabited part of the community and safe from observation. Consequently, Harasaki is in a good position to report to the FOA only those cutting operations, and the volume, that he desires. Informants and village residents in general discuss his operations in this respect fairly openly and in detail, the matter being viewed as common knowledge. On one occasion he is reported to have officially listed the price of the trees he purchased at a figure considerably above the actual price, thus permitting Harasaki to pay a low lumber-dealing tax, but requiring the seller to pay a larger forest-income tax.³² He is generally accused of protecting his own forests and those of his friends by diverting the majority of wartime PTC contracts to other owners.

Activities of this kind have resulted in considerable criticism of the FOA and its chief officers,³³ but it is acknowledged by everyone that criticism has little effect while Harasaki remains the chief and dominant figure in the organization. Informants state that Yoichiro himself is invulnerable to gossip, and largely ignores it. He relies upon his own sense of appropriateness to control his actions and dealings, and apparently feels he knows how not to "go too far." Moreover, he has manipulated the situation in such a way so as to keep to a minimum his own personal involvement in shady deals and power plays; his lieutenants automatically act in his interests.

The question may be asked, what do others gain from Harasaki's control over the forestry industry? Why do they "put up with it?" Part of the answer to this question can be found in the ceremonial, ethical, and emotional sanctions in the institutional system itself, namely the fact that once a system of obligations is functioning, it takes considerable courage and individual action to stop it. But in addition it is evident that monopolistic domination of all the cutting in one area means that there exists assurance of certain basic returns for all. Since the majority of timber cut in Nishiota is bought by the KCC at a reasonable if not high price, and since the KCC is a

32. The lumber dealing tax is imposed on the purchase of the trees, and is computed on the amount of money paid for the trees. The forest-income tax is imposed on the seller and is computed on the same amount. The amount officially reported must be used in tax computations.

33. See Appendix, quotations Nos. 2, 3.

large company with many contracts, regular income can be expected for the timber dealers who cooperate with Yoichiro, the forest owners can sell their trees whenever they need money, and forest workers are assured of a steady job. Moreover, Harasaki distributes incidental rewards and favors to his friends and associates whenever practical. His disposition of the new government reforestation subsidies seems to be a case in point.³⁴

(3) The Kaga City Construction Co.

As noted in the first section, Mr. Harasaki maintains a de facto control over the KCC, the largest contracting and construction firm in Kaga. This company operates its own sawmill, manufactures tategu and furniture, and constructs houses and buildings. The current president is Harasaki's eldest son, Yosuke. A history of this company will serve to illustrate certain patterns in Harasaki's system of power and influence:

Before the war, a sawmill occupied the site of the present KCC plant. This sawmill was jointly managed by one Kita, of Tokyo, and one Sata of "Nuita Mura."³⁵ In 1941, Kita resigned his connections and a kitchenware dealer of Tokyo replaced him. The sawmill was poorly managed and finally went up for sale.

In 1944, Tomo Toda, the father of Yoichiro's daughter's husband, and the wartime chief of the Kaga City office of the PTC, bought the sawmill on the strength of a promised army contract for the manufacture of knock-down barracks for troops in the South Seas. The business started with ¥85,000 capital, under a Mr. Higashi of Tokyo as president and with Toda as manager.³⁶

34. See Appendix, Quotation No. 2.

35. This village is one of the several communities in the "Kaga City" region. It was not among the three or four villages studied intensively by the research team.

36. This situation of the owner functioning as "manager," and an apparent outsider as "president" may sound strange to those not familiar with Japanese business practices. It is often customary to appoint as president of a company a man with appropriate influence and prestige, regardless of his ownership status in the organization. While the details are not known, Higashi could have been the influential go-between who secured the Army contract for Toda. Or, he could have been one to whom Toda had considerable obligation for past favors.

The company received a wartime ration of 500 koku of timber from the PTC for the barracks contract. As can be imagined, this was not difficult to secure considering that Mr. Toda was the chief of the PTC office. However, by the time work had begun, the war was drawing to its close and the contract was not fulfilled.

The evidence indicates that the KCC's financial position was in considerable disorder at the time of the Surrender. Much had depended upon the successful implementation of the Army contract, and with the failure of this the company was near collapse. However, after the war contractors were in a favored position, with the desperate need for new construction in the bombed-out city areas. At this time Masaru Harasaki, Yoichiro's cousin and a director of the company, emerged as prominent in the company's fortunes and misfortunes. Masaru was not only a director of the KCC, but was (and is) the president of the Harasaki Kumi, another construction and contracting firm of Kaga City. This provided an opportunity for combining the resources of the KCC and those of the Kumi.

Masaru seized the opportunity, as perhaps befit a Harasaki, but showed a certain lack of discretion in his activities. The disorderly finances of the KCC resulted in a general exodus of the other directors and officers, leaving Masaru in control. Masaru used timber belonging to the company, as well as its machinery, to carry out the Kumi's contracts for some 100 houses, awarded to it by the Government Housing Corporation. This operation was performed openly and blatantly, and pressure from other businessmen and influential persons of Kaga City forced him out of the directorship of the KCC.

At this point the former directors of the company, some of whom retained financial interest in the organization, came to Yoichiro Harasaki and requested him to depose his ambitious relative and take over the presidency of the KCC.

Yoichiro obliged. From this point on the fortunes of the company prospered, aided by Yoichiro's expert management plus the postwar boom in the building industry. To quote an interview, "During this period a wooden shoji that cost about ¥100 to make would sell for upwards of ¥150 at the factory. In such a situation the company became very firmly established." In 1948 Yoichiro transferred the presidency of the company to his first son, Yosuke, but has remained as the real power in the organization. Harasaki also arranged to have Mr. Ikeda, the present mayor, hired as a salaried "advisor" of the company.

It will be noted that the history of this company is entangled in Yoichiro's kin relationships. Toda is the father of the husband of Yoichiro's daughter, Masaru is a cousin, and Yosuke, the current president, is the eldest son. Both Toda and Masaru, in spite of their kinship connections with the boss, are said to be out of favor with Yoichiro at the present time. Both of them also made considerable money during the war in a variety of timber deals and construction contracts. Toda never recovered from his failure as manager of the KCC and is now a minor timber dealer in Nishiota; Masaru remains as president of Harasaki Kumi, now one of the three largest construction companies in Kaga City. His rather unfriendly relations with his brother-in-law apparently are not such as to hinder his continued activities. The precise relationship between the two men is not known.

(4) The Ota Timber Co.

As previously noted, Mr. Harasaki was the wartime chief of the local FOA. During the war, the Forest Owners' Associations were little more than village agencies for the government timber company branch offices. Thus the chief and the leaders in each local FOA had virtually complete control over the buying and cutting of forests in their localities. The two government companies would issue contracts for timber to the FOAs, which would then agree to produce the stated volume of timber, negotiating the contracts with individual forest owners. The price was fixed at a very low rate. At the end of the war, the FOA in Nishiota, as in most communities, was left with a large amount of bought-and-paid-for (at the low price) timber on its hands.

Just previous to the official dissolution of the PTC, Yoichiro Harasaki and other leaders of the Nishiota FOA formed the Ota Timber Co. (OTC), investing a total of ¥198,000, half by Yoichiro, half by the others. The list of officers and employees of this company is constituted exclusively of the FOA members, their kin relatives, and former employees of the Kaga City branch office of the PTC. One of the last official acts of the PTC was to give the OTC the legal right to cut some 50,000 koku of timber, this quantity being drawn from the already-purchased stands. The PTC was reimbursed for its trees at the low official price. The FOA (dominated by Harasaki) stated that the government contracts had to be honored, even though the forest owners wanted to cancel them and were willing to give back a part or all of the price paid them by the PTC.

The OTC was well-managed and made large profits from its 50,000 koku. The difference between the price paid for the trees and the high price they sold for in the postwar construction boom was, naturally, responsible for the profit. Nevertheless, in spite of these prosperous dealings, the company was suddenly dissolved, and in 1949 the investors were repaid with six times the original amount they contributed. The dissolution of the OTC resulted in the closing of six sawmills in Nishiota and loss of jobs for about 100 workers.

The question arises, why was the company disbanded? Three reasons are apparent: The first, the official, publicly-acknowledged reason, was heavy taxation and excessive operating expenses which had to be borne by the officers (somewhat strange in light of the also publicly-acknowledged profits.). Secondly, the company appears to have been formed for the express purpose of realizing a quick profit on the low-priced trees remaining in the PTC contracts. Once these trees had been cut, as they had by the end of 1948, the officers saw no reason to continue the company's existence. Third, and perhaps most cogent, is the fact that Mr. Harasaki had just shifted his interests to the fortunes of the KCC (as related previously), and he wished to give the KCC a free hand in the timber and construction field. The OTC stood in the way; it prevented a concentration of ownership and control. Mr. Harasaki admitted nearly as much in his own interview. When asked by the interviewer to "tell me about the Ota Timber Co.," Harasaki answered:

Well, some of the business the FOA contracted for in wartime was transferred after the Surrender to the OTC. But the company was dissolved in March, 1949. This company was only in the business of buying and selling trees, and didn't do much in the sawing line. It had only two sawmills of 20 H. P. each. This meant that factories in Kaga had to do all the sawing, and the timbers bought by the OTC had to be sent to Kaga. So there was no necessity for keeping sawmills in the village any more, and the company was dissolved.

The "factories in Kaga" which did the sawing were, of course, the Kaga City Construction Co.

During the brief span of life of the OTC, there occurred a number of incidents which assist understanding of Harasaki's manipulations in the postwar period which have led to his present dominant position. It was during this period that he was able to consolidate his control over a large sector of the timber business and

establish his authority in the majority of timber sales and felling operations in the community. It was in this period that the incident documented in Study I occurred, in which a Mr. Tasaka, through the offices of Kaichiro Ashida, purchased a stand of trees in Nishiota. As reported in the Study, he was eventually forced to resell the stand, without cutting, to the OTC. Mr. Tasaka committed the errors of failing to present ritual sake to Yoichiro, not asking his permission to buy and cut, and thereby denying him the chance to possibly "cut in" on the deal. Ashida, on the other hand, committed the error of attempting to act unilaterally, without Yoichiro's permission, in order to consolidate his own power. This attempt failed, and he had to make amends.

Perhaps most important was the fact that the tracts purchased by Tasaka were among those assigned to the OTC by the FOA, and therefore Harasaki could not permit their sale to an outsider. The whole quasi-legal operation of the OTC's handling of the wartime contract would have been threatened. The Tasaka incident focussed on a number of crucial phases of Yoichiro's accumulation of power, and consequently he could not permit the transaction to take place.

Two quotations from interviews with highly respected and prominent Kaga City residents are fitting conclusions to this account of Karasaki's business activities:

The Vice President of the Kaga City Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated,

These days cutting trees is a difficult thing, believe me. Certain people can make it very difficult for one to make a purchase, cut the trees, and get them out of the forest. You have to get permission to use a skid trail, to employ your workers, and to finish your negotiations with everyone involved in the deal. In some villages I could mention, the Forest Owners' Association stands in the way of everything. If they can't stop your deals, they do such things as deliberately leaving a horse cart or a pile of logs on the trail, or even on the road where the truck has to pass. Such things are common these days in - well, in Nishiota Mura. I simply won't buy any trees in that village while Yoichiro controls everything. It isn't worth it!

The President of the Iwata Timber Company, and a responsible timber dealer in Kaga, commented,

The people of Nishiota are generally sort of truculent people who always want an unreasonable profit from a man who buys trees there. All kinds of illegal things take place - and it's all at the orders of that Yoichiro Harasaki. It has gotten so that nobody from the outside buys any trees there anymore. Everything's monopolized by Yoichiro.

(5) Harasaki's Control of Labor

Up to this point Yoichiro's power and influence with respect to the buyer-seller group in the forestry industry has been discussed. It was implied there that control over forestry workers comes as a matter of course, once control over the entrepreneur and owner class is consolidated.

In the postwar period one-half to two-thirds of all trees cut in Nishiota were handled by companies under Harasaki's control (OTC or KCC). Thus a majority of the lumbermen and sawmill workers in the village have been employees of Harasaki and his associates. By 1950, nearly all outside timber dealers had ceased buying in Nishiota, so virtually all the workers in the community were employed by Harasaki and persons in his circle of influence. The number of lumbermen and sawmill and wood workers employed by the KCC is in the neighborhood of 250.

Five lumbermen were interviewed in Nishiota. Four of them worked for the KCC, the fifth for other timber dealers. Two of the KCC employees worked an average of 20 days a month during 1949 - a good average in the lumber industry. The other two worked intermittently, preferring to share their forestry labor with other occupations. All four stated that while the KCC pay was low, a worker could be assured of regular employment and income, and that this was more than other dealers and construction companies could offer in these depressed times.

To quote one lumberman directly,

I am a regular employee and a follower of a big lumber dealer (Harasaki), so I don't have to worry about my job.³⁷ Temporary employees have to worry about employment.

37. The first sentence is a free translation of Japanese, "... okina yamashi ni tsuite irukara, shimpai we nai." The phrase ni tsuite expresses a relationship of leader and follower, plus the idea of mutual dependency. Thus the concept of mutual obligation in the employer-employee relationship is brought out. The translation "regular" employee and follower is a rough approximation.

The lumbermen interviewed, as well as other respondents, were asked why there existed no lumbermens' labor union in Nishiota village. One of the lumbermen explained,

We don't have a labor union in our village. If anyone tries to start one, or even discuss it, they are looked at as nothing but Reds. As for myself, I simply don't see any necessity for one. I am on very close terms with my boss ("oyabun"), Mr. Harasaki, and he takes very good care of my family.

This man's approval of Harasaki is of special interest since his brother died in a lumbering accident while working for Harasaki.³⁸

Similar evidence of Harasaki's concern for his workers' interests comes from a hostile source, the operator of a charcoal kiln living in another village;

Workers can't possibly have a labor union in Nishiota. That oyabun there is too powerful and unreasonable. Once I remember they had a baseball game between Mr. Harasaki's workers and the team of another company. Mr. Harasaki thought about nothing but winning the game. The umpire made a fair judgment on a play which went against Mr. Harasaki's team, but Mr. Harasaki got angry and made the umpire go back on his decision. All he thought about was his own team winning. He is that unreasonable and dictatorial.

This incident (actually more details were given, but the above statement will serve) reveals much about Harasaki's personality and mode of operation. His dictatorial character, bursting forth occasionally in fits of anger which lead to decisions based on force, combined with a fierce sense of loyalty and obligation to his followers, is sharply drawn. As one of the researchers observed, "This incident reveals one of the oyabun-like mechanisms which drives any oyabun to work for the benefit of the people under his patronage."

38. These favorable comments do not mean that all workers love their boss. On the contrary, evidence of dislike on the part of workers was found (see Appendix, quotations 4, 5). However, even those workers who dislike Harasaki acknowledge that he keeps them supplied with jobs and performs numerous services for them and their families.

Like other bosses, Harasaki extends to his laborers obligations beyond giving them jobs and salary. He indemnifies his workers in the event of an accident, awards special bonuses from time to time, and helps finance family illnesses, weddings, and other emergencies. The absence of a union is not difficult to understand in the context of this type of "paternalism."

The worker interviewed who is not employed by the KCC is a relative of an ex-mayor of the village³⁹ who is an old enemy of Yoichiro. The worker lives in "Shimo Yamada Buraku" (downstream area) and works intermittently for various timber dealers from other communities. He was difficult to interview and showed great anxiety over his employment security and income. He stated that he rarely saw other workers in the community.

The extent of Harasaki's control over labor is documented in Study I. Mr. Tasaka's abortive attempt at buying and cutting a stand included the employment of a lumber gang, hired through Kaichiro Ashida, a dealer nominally under Harasaki's control. But Ashida was unable to get away with his attempt at unilateral action, and only a few of the workers actually showed up at the site. The workers actually reported for duty at another site, in a different area, purchased quickly in order to hinder Tasaka's operation.

D. The Pattern of Power: Techniques and Limitations

In the previous sections the background, business activities, and rise to power and influence of Mr. Harasaki have been presented descriptively and episodically. Some generalizations may now be made.

(1) Techniques of Acquiring and Retaining Power

Harasaki's approach to the problem of accumulation of power may be succinctly described as a successful combination of sharp, materialistic business methods, often verging on the illegal, with traditional Japanese rules for the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships.⁴⁰

39. See Appendix, Quotation No. 3.

40. Note that no imputation of motive is made here. It is not known whether Mr. Harasaki is motivated predominantly by desire for power and influence, for a close circle of friends, or for money. The above appraisal is offered as an objective judgment of his methods and activities which are known in some detail.

Thus, his manipulations in the wartime FOA, the Ota Timber Co. episode, and his success in "freezing out" timber dealers from other localities are all instances of exceedingly ruthless business procedure, sometimes slightly illegal or extra-legal, but usually within the letter of the law. His objectives are direct and explicit, and he is apparently willing to use almost any means available within a certain range to accomplish them.

With such business methods goes a reliance upon, and utilization of, certain traditional modes of interpersonal relationship in Japanese society. From Harasaki's standpoint, the system of obligations is in part a conscious selection of a method to accumulate and maintain power; in part an unconscious, "natural" development of impulses and motivations characteristic of individuals in Japanese society. Harasaki may at times deliberately cultivate obligations, and at other times simply behave according to "sincere" motives. Thus he is finicky about ritual and ceremony, insisting on the usual exchanges of sake and formalized speeches when deals are consummated, and probably feeling that such is due him not only because of his superior status but also because it is the "proper" way of doing things. He utilizes his connection with Mr. Ikeda most advantageously and cleverly, but also is very proud of his close relationship with the inheritor of the ⁴¹ centuries of sacred prestige surrounding the Hanagamori Shrine. ⁴² He exploits workers, but fiercely defends their interests in baseball games (!).

41. Harasaki is sometimes accused of more strenuously illegal practices, but it is naturally very difficult to verify such instances. An example appears in the Appendix, Quotation No. 1.

42. To the American way of thinking, this combination of shrewd, materialistic manipulation with sacred and ritualistic elements and reliance upon tradition is incongruous and foreign. It is difficult to understand it from a personal standpoint; that is, how a given individual can do both and still act consistently. The situation is more comprehensible if it is viewed in the context of role and function, rather than personality. Thus, Mr. Harasaki serves as a kind of unifier of institutional patterns - he serves his own power interests, but at the same time keeps the economy functioning so as to permit everyone to realize some profit, upholds local traditions and patterns of social relationship, and maintains the community status system. Within all these categories he has an important role to play, and his power is one measure of his success in performing these roles well. The Japanese institutional system contains definitions of patterns of relationship and ideology; Mr. Harasaki acts within these and at the same time exploits them.

There is, first of all, the use of kin relatives and kin relationships to build up a group of reliable henchmen and followers. In Harasaki's domains, relatives are found occupying most of the key posts. Power can be accumulated by degrees through the appointment of kin relatives to positions of importance and influence, and subsequently power can be "kept in the family" once it has been achieved. Relatives can be relied upon to carry out one's bidding, and to act in one's interest without being told. A relative, to a degree greater than non relatives, must abide by the roles of giri (obligation).

The use of favors rendered to keep others in obligation to oneself ("noblesse oblige") is also used by Harasaki in an effective manner. The scope of his operations is such that everyone connected with the timber industry in Nishiota who cooperates with him can expect to receive a fairly steady income. His friends and associates can expect to receive special favors, like government subsidies, or Harasaki's help in evasion of taxes. As workers admit, "Harasaki pays low, but you can be assured of a steady job, and he takes care of your family." Thus, the growth of his influence and control roughly correlates with the growth of his favors rendered. Within certain limits, the more he grants, the more he acquires, and vice versa. However, it should not be thought that the returns for his favors are given freely in all cases. Many people hate him, and many feel that he has done them more harm than good in the long run. But the threat of economic sanctions, which Harasaki can employ if necessary, and the general institutional-ethical sanctions ("you just don't violate giri") are sufficiently strong to keep the system operating effectively. (Actually it is very difficult to document the strength of institutional sanctions. Interviews with Harasaki kobun and associates failed to yield objective analyses of the system. However, the conclusion is implicit in the structure of the system and is found in the related RJSR study of the labor boss system.)

In return for favors rendered, Harasaki expects obedience, loyalty, and action in his own interest. A timber dealer must buy only the stands designated by Harasaki or a lieutenant; a worker must work only on Harasaki lumbering operations; a forest owner must sell only to Harasaki dealers. Moreover, individuals within the system of obligation are expected to act in Harasaki's interest, whether or not he gives orders. There is an expectation on Harasaki's part that his henchmen and followers will so identify themselves with Harasaki and his interests that they

can act voluntarily in accordance with the system.⁴³ Of course, mistakes are made, and individuals may from time to time attempt to make their own deals and acquire their own power.

However, it is interesting to note that even when they do so Harasaki calls upon them to redress their sins by carrying out his wishes. Thus Kaichiro Ashida, in order to make amends for his attempt at acting unilaterally, had to persuade Tasaka to resell the forests he had bought to the OTC, Harasaki's company.

Obviously, then, not everyone need report directly to Mr. Harasaki. The oyabun should not be seen as a dictator with absolute power and a downtrodden mass of followers. On the contrary, he occupies a kind of central position in a complex hierarchical and overlapping system of control, with each sphere of control having its own system of obligation and hierarchy. Yoichiro's lieutenants are bosses in their own right, with their own lieutenants and their own followers. Such a man is Kaichiro Ashida, who figured in the Tasaka case as a temporary rebel, and likewise Tosaku Maeda, Harasaki's lieutenant in the FOA. Masaru Harasaki is in some respects a lieutenant of Yoichiro's, but he has become sufficiently powerful and independent to begin the process of splitting away from Yoichiro and becoming a kind of rival boss of equal status. The mayor, Mr. Ikeda, has a special role. He is an equal, a patron, and friend, but has little to do with Harasaki's business affairs. Harasaki derives reflected prestige from the connection.

Harasaki's system of control results in the development of a clique of powerful individuals who dominate the entire forestry economy of the community, from the FOA down to the workers. This clique also has a considerable amount of control over the political structure of the village, through their domination of the village office. Harasaki himself had had, or has now, several official jobs in the top organizations of the community, but these jobs,

43. The shadow of so-called "feudal" relationships appears here. Similar identification and loyalty patterns, and reciprocal services, were found in lord-vassal relationships. However, the "feudal" character of these Japanese patterns should not be overstressed. It is equally meaningful to call it "familism" - which connotes the fact that the relationships between parties in the system have an implicit model in the relationships between members of the Japanese family, particularly between father and son and between brothers.

while necessary to consolidate his power, are probably more of a liability than an advantage. He is in a position to trust a group of loyal henchmen who can carry out his interests, making it possible for him to stay behind the scenes. There are many aspects to this Japanese system of hierarchical control which render it advantageous to keep out of sight as much as possible, once power has been attained.

(2) Limitations on Harasaki's Power

The preceding analysis may give the impression that Mr. Harasaki's power is virtually absolute, cannot be broken, and is guarded by more or less foolproof defenses. This impression is misleading, and it is necessary to show some of the limitations and weaknesses of Yoichiro's position.

In the first place, there exists at the time of writing certain basic geographical limitations on his sphere of control. He is a resident of Kinoshita Oaza, an upstream hamlet, and can therefore personally observe all lumbering operations in that locality. The majority of his closest followers live here also. His control in this area is absolute, but it wanes as one travels downstream, where close supervision of forestry is less convenient, and where henchmen are more difficult to retain. Moreover, the KCC cannot use all the timber cut in Nishiota; thus there exists some scope for outside dealers, and dealers not completely within his circle, to operate. He retains power over dealers as long as he can guarantee to purchase, at a respectable price, all the timber they can acquire.

Within the city of Kaga, Yoichiro has little power. He is not prominent in city affairs and is not a member of civic and economic organizations. The KCC plant, although located in Kaga, does not thereby entitle him to a position of influence. There is evidence that the prominent timber men of Kaga regard him as a kind of offensive rural upstart.

Secondly, Harasaki's sphere of influence is confined to forestry and does not extend to other local industries. He does not control, nor attempt to do so, affairs of the farming, hemp-raising, stone-cutting, and other industries of the village. He is a director of the Agricultural Cooperative Association, but informants state that while he uses information he receives in this job, he does not attempt to meddle with the affairs of the farmers. One informant stated, "If he tried to interfere, the big farmers would really attack him. They know all about his dealings."⁴⁴

44. Since the majority of "big farmers" of Nishiota (those with about 1 cho of land) are also forest owners, this statement does not quite ring true. However, other informants pointed out that most of the farmer forest owners are located in the downstream area where Yoichiro is less influential. It appears that his power belongs in the upstream area where forest owners own little farmland.

The above limitations are those deriving from the particular geographical and economic factors in his field of business. Those to follow are based on the nature of his techniques of power accumulation and maintenance:

Since the Japanese system of obligation and familial relationships is, in varying degrees, a system of reciprocity, Yoichiro is required to give as well as receive. Magnanimity and noblesse oblige are mandatory. In the long run, he may receive more than he gives, but the point is that he cannot afford to withhold extensively or for long. As pointed out in the preceding sections, he must see to it that those who have obligation to him must also be rewarded for their obedience and loyalty. Substantially, the rewards are, for workers, a regular, if not high income, a steady job, and help in family emergencies. For business associates, rewards lie in profitable dealings and incidental favors of all kinds.

Now, the reciprocal character of the system means that there is no absolute power within it. Yoichiro can expect challenges to his regime, as in the case of Ashida, who doubtless has aspirations of his own and will remain under Harasaki's control only as long as it is necessary. Harasaki must also share some power with Masaru. And if he lost the friendship and support of Ikeda, he might have a difficult time indeed. In Ikeda's case, there already exist rumors of estrangement.⁴⁵ Yoichiro has provided Ikeda with good profits and excellent management of his forests, but Ikeda may decide he can no longer stomach the shady dealings of his agent.

There are also limits to the extent of use of openly ruthless business methods. By exerting force, he in a sense places himself in a position of confessing that the reciprocal system of obligations has broken down. That is, he cannot get people to do what he wants them to do by the expectable rewards and consequently must use force. Other things being equal, the more ruthless his methods become, and the more force he uses, the weaker his position becomes. People turn away from him, hatred grows, and they are held in check only by fear of reprisal. In some respects, he has already reached this position. The conclusions of one member of the field research staff are illuminating: "He is hated now not only by the timber dealers in Kaga, but also by many villagers. At this time, however, nobody has sufficient power to challenge him. Since he has extended his circle to include large numbers of workers and small business men,

45. See Appendix, Quotation No. 1.

as well as the most influential people in forestry, open criticism is hazardous, to say the least. But he is disliked."

A Kaga City timber dealer, speaking of bosses and sharp business operators in general, commented,

To be a good businessman - I mean one who is always successful - you need to be respected. You need to exercise ninjo - it's really a matter of ninjo. You have to combine good business sense with human feelings, that's the way. Now these people who don't use ninjo (warm, friendly, human understanding) in their business, and there are some around here, just won't last long.⁴⁶

Finally, Harasaki's very prominence in the civic affairs of the village constitute a limitation on his exercise of power. His responsibilities as ex-mayor, present postmaster, and Chief of the FOA mean that he cannot afford to operate too openly or strenuously, because his enemies may attack him legally. Thus, there exists a loophole which some aspiring new boss, like Ashida, might take advantage of to maneuver Yoichiro into a position where he dare not interfere too openly. Yoichiro must depend upon others to act in his interests; it is risky to order his followers to carry out such things as preventing by force the buying of timbers by outside timber dealers. As long as it is advantageous to stay in his favor, other dealers and owners will exclude outsiders. Once this is no longer advantageous, or if a rival wishes to begin an attack, Yoichiro's prominence becomes a liability.

46. The term, "ninjo" is used here rather freely and colloquially to refer to the "noblesse oblige," "magnanimity" aspect of the reciprocal system of obligations. That is, the business man is supposed to effect a combination of self-interest with consideration (ninjo) for the opposite member of the deal, particularly when he has some kind of advantage over the other. This meaning of "ninjo" is common in Japanese parlance. A more technical meaning assigned to ninjo is found in Ruth Benedict, Chrysanthemum and the Sword, and is also used by a group of Japanese social scientists who have made analyses of Japanese character similar to Benedict's. This meaning holds ninjo to be the human considerations, the human feelings, which get in the way of duty and obligation and create severe conflict (e.g., kabuki themes).

E. Conclusions

In the Introduction to this report, certain general statements were made concerning the distinctive problems of the forestry social-economy and the general Japanese economic problem. It was stated there that in an overpopulated society with insufficient natural resources and low capital reserves the economy must be stretched and adjusted to meet the needs of large numbers of people who would otherwise be jobless or become wards of the state. It was stated further that in the forestry regions of Japan population has increased since the war's end, both by natural increase and by an influx of families formerly supported by war industries and activities. These people have been thrown back upon the local forestry economy as a source of employment. Added to this has been a post-war boom in construction, and these factors, with others, have led to an unprecedented volume of forest cutting in the past five years.

In general, the Japanese approach to problems of overpopulation in a marginal economy has been to permit an indefinite expansion of employment, with rational and efficient management a secondary consideration. The state has had little concern with the problems of individual and group security, these being the function of private groupings within the society. Consequently, state employment security measures, unemployment insurance, and public works projects have been weakly developed, and even under Occupation reforms they have not made extensive strides. In their place have been found the padding of employment rosters, numerous small-scale productive units, and the formation of groups of employees ranged around individuals called "bosses" who guarantee a minimum rate of employment in return for loyalty. In this way, a maximum number of people are supported, at the price of general management inefficiency and hierarchical (i.e., "non democratic") systems of control.

The forestry industry provides good examples of these various tendencies. Being almost entirely rural in locus and dominated by small "primary" groups and productive units with small capital resources, it presents abundant possibilities for the development of bossism. These bosses are important in the study of Japanese forestry economy for two reasons, first, they provide a case example of one method by which the forestry industry can support a very large number of people. That is, through the development of hierarchies of loyalty and obligation, in which everyone is assured some kind of return on his services, a maximum number receive some share of the proceeds, and public welfare and employment support is not required. Second, the bosses provide data on the social dimension of the over-exploitation of forests; that is, they show how purely social goals of prestige and maintenance of

obligations contribute to a tendency to cut forests without regard for a rational concept of "sustained yield".

From the standpoint of reforms, it is necessary to observe that any remedial program which ignores these systems of goals and patterns of social relationship at the local level would be seriously hampered. The status system and power structure of the community must be carefully considered in any reform program, whether that program seeks to eliminate some of the features of these systems themselves, or whether its objectives are confined strictly to practical accomplishments; e.g., reduction of cutting.

The entrepreneur bosses of the forestry industry cannot be ignored, and it would be exceedingly difficult to eliminate them. Of course, in many ways their power can be curbed. Thus, elimination of dealer control of the skid trail, as recommended in the first of the two studies, might help considerably. But it is equally important to recognize that the boss is a vital element in the success of any reform operated at the community level. By working through him, instead of around him, support for a project can be virtually assured and communication with influential villagers is facilitated.

It should also be remembered that the successful forestry boss is, by and large, one who already knows the value of sound conservation methods. He is generally a good forester and a good businessman, and has deep roots in his community and complex relationships with its members. His long-term value, in the context of the general Japanese economic problem, is a matter for discussion transcending the objectives of this study. However, the forestry reformer cannot ignore him.

From the standpoint of social welfare, the boss occupies an equally important position. If reduction of cutting means reduced employment, the system of private welfare and support of workers developed by the bosses must be taken into account. On the one hand, the bosses might be persuaded to enter business other than forestry, taking their labor kobun with them. This course leaves the power of the boss intact. On the other hand, the introduction of public welfare measures (work relief, unemployment insurance etc.) would help remove the workers from boss control and seriously curb the oyabun's power. Decisions on such courses of action concern not only big bosses like Harasaki but also all the employers and labor group leaders in the industry, for the patterns of obligation and of social hierarchy are general and widespread regardless of scale of operation. They are an inherent feature of the Japanese social economy and should be included in the calculations for any reform or major change in economy and society.

STUDY II

APPENDIX

TYPICAL COMMENTS BY INFORMANTS CRITICAL OF HARASAKI'S ACTIVITIES

The following are translations of parts of verbatim interviews made with residents of "Nishiota Village" and "Kaga City." In some cases the entire interview was focussed on Harasaki; in other cases the comments and criticism were introduced by the informant voluntarily as illustrations for other subjects:

1. Medium-scale lumber dealer of Kaga City. Age 60. Has been a lumber dealer in the region since age 18.

You can't buy timber anymore in Nishiota, because Yoichiro Harasaki makes it so difficult. He disturbs and pesters any lumber dealer who dares to come into the village to buy trees. It is especially hard to do any business in Kinoshita Buraku, where Yoichiro lives. And if you are able to buy a stand of timber, you can't get any workers to work for you. They are afraid of offending Harasaki by working for you, and losing the secure jobs which he gets for them. Workers simply can't make a living around there if they lose his favor.

You know Mr. Ikeda has been a friend and associate of Harasaki's for a long time, but there are rumors now that he is thinking less of him. I can't tell one way or the other, though.

During the war Harasaki saw to it that the forests of others were cut heavily for government contracts, but he did his best to leave his own uncut. He said that all forests located where it was convenient to transport the trees should be cut first, and this meant that his own, located high in the mountains, would be uncut. What he did was to cut his own trees secretly, at night, and sell them to black market dealers at a high price. That sort of thing simply isn't honest!

Harasaki got hold of the uncut government-purchased stands after the Surrender, and used them for his own benefit. He was cutting in those forests as late as 1949.

2. Forest owner-farmer. Age about 50. Member of Food Administration Committee of Nishiota Village.

This Forest Owners' Association here is just operated by the boss for his own benefit. Actually nobody even attends the directors' meetings these days. You can't get any information, or conduct any business with the FOA. For example, we know that the government has a subsidy for reforestation, but when we mention it, Harasaki avoids the topic. We can't get information from him on the regulations permitting you to qualify for the subsidy. Somebody is getting the subsidy, of course, but nothing is announced publicly. Of course it is his friends who are getting it.

I don't trust the account books of the FOA, either. I suspect that the budget is used by Harasaki as he pleases.

3. Ex-mayor of Nishiota Village. Age 35.

The directors of the FOA are very unfair. They've always been that way. During the war they managed to leave their own forests in good shape, and sacrificed everyone else's. When any leader of the FOA sold his trees he didn't pay the commission fee.⁴⁷ The only explanation for this is that the officers were selling their trees on the black market.

The FOA here is completely unreliable. The worst instance of their dealings I can tell you about, is this one: In the Spring of 1945 many Government purchase contracts were made at the very low wartime

47. In the period of timber controls it was necessary for an owner to apply for permission to cut. The FOA inspected the sale, and determined whether it could be made within the Forest Management Plan. If it could, the owner was notified and required to pay a fee for the permission slip.

controlled price. Forest owners wanted to cancel these contracts, because they didn't want to cut, and also wanted to get a higher price. But the FOA decided that the contracts were legal and had to go through, in spite of the Surrender. So they started to cut, and cut about 50,000 koku. I know about one deal - some trees in Itazawa Valley here - they were part of the low priced trees, and were sold by the Ota Timber Co. to a lumber dealer in Kaga who paid a very high price. No wonder the Ota Timber Co. and the Kaga Kensetsu got so prosperous.

4. Lumberman in Nishiota Village. Age 40.

The FOA here is unkind to the village people, and it is run only for the personal benefit of its members and officers. The villagers around here call the officers and top men shinko zaibatsu (upstart money crowd). They made their fortunes by selling trees for ¥200 to ¥400 per koku which they had bought during the war for ¥5 to ¥7 a koku.

5. Father of a cart driver in Nishiota Village. Age 60.

The forest owners of this area sold most of their trees on the compulsory wartime quota, but there were some owners who managed to keep their forests pretty much uncut through the war. Those people can sell their trees for pretty high prices now, I can tell you! One of the owners who had to cut all his trees during the war went into bankruptcy after the Surrender, and he committed suicide. Think of that. But that man Harasaki made a large fortune... no, I don't want to say any more. I don't want this to be heard by Harasaki so I'd better hold my tongue.

6. Wife of a forest owner in Nishiota Village. Age 45.

Most of the trees in our forest were cut on the wartime quota. We had to do it. Everything else we had left (trees and forest land) was sold to Harasaki after the war. Harasaki persuaded my husband to sell, because he told him that the price was very good, although I was against it from the beginning. Harasaki even asked us later to sell him the forest registered under my name, but I simply wouldn't sell it! You know, most all the

forest owners in Akasaka sold their forest. It was awful. One of them committed suicide later, because of the bankruptcy caused by the sale. Most of these forests were bought by Harasaki, and we know that he sold a lot of them again right away, and made a big fortune that way. All the owners here really bitterly regret selling to him.⁴⁸

7. The interview with Mr. Harasaki.

Immediately after arrival in Nishiota, the research staff requested an interview with Mr. Harasaki through the village office, on the strength of his position as Chief of the FOA and ex-mayor. The village office gave no definite word for two days. On the third day they stated that it would be possible, and made an appointment for the following day. However, the next day the staff was notified that Mr. Harasaki was ill and could not hold the interview. Several days later an interviewer was told by a respondent that Mr. Harasaki was not really very ill and could easily hold an interview. The interviewer called on Mr. Harasaki and was admitted to his room where he lay in bed.

The interviewer directed the interview along desired topics, and Mr. Harasaki himself was friendly, willing to talk freely, although rarely communicating any important information. He voluntarily called an officer of the FOA on the telephone, ordering him to look up some information concerning his story of the activities of the FOA (that is, the open and legitimate activities). Mr. Harasaki was completely well, and the interviewer expressed doubt that it was necessary for him to remain in bed.

48. According to the above two comments, Harasaki is supposed to have purchased large tracts of forest immediately after the war. It could not be determined precisely what these people were referring to-Ota Timber Co. deals, or personal deals of Harasaki, or what. Confusion over events taking place in the postwar period is evident in most interviews in this locality. It could not be determined if the suicides in the above two accounts referred to the same person.

The interview itself need not be reproduced here. Mr. Harasaki gave the impression of discussing his dealings frankly and openly, but actually told relatively little. He spent much time discussing tax evasion, even admitting that he attempted to evade some of last year's taxes and stating that he was caught. He blamed tax evasion on unfair assessments and had detailed suggestions for changes and improvements. In all this discussion no indication of the extent of his complex dealings and tax evasions was given. Other portions of the interview give interesting information on aspects of the timber business in the area not examined in the two studies.